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SCIENCE

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THE RUMFORD FUND OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.¹

BENJAMIN THOMPSON, COUNT RUMFORD, was born at Woburn, Mass., March 26, 1753, and died at Auteuil, France, August 21, 1814. During his boyhood he showed an intense interest in scientific matters and attended scientific lectures at Harvard College. Afterwards he studied medicine, though he never practised, and taught school at Concord, N. H. He was suspected of being unfriendly to the cause of liberty in the war of the Revolution, and on the evacuation of Boston by the British—in March, 1776—he went to England.

Here he prosecuted various scientific researches, and was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1779. He subsequently entered the employ of Prince Maximilian of Bavaria, to whom he was of great service, reorganizing the army, instituting important social reforms, and at the same time prosecuting valuable scientific researches. Of these the most noteworthy was his well-known investigation into the cause of the heat produced by friction, by which he conclusively disproved the hypothesis of the fluid nature of heat, and laid an important stone in the foundation of the doctrine of the conservation of energy. He was created a count by Prince Maximilian, and chose the title Count Rumford, after the New Hampshire town from which the family of his wife had come.

In 1799 he returned to England, and soon after projected the Royal Institution of Great Britain. He went to France in

¹ Published by the Academy.